IronWatch

Issue 16

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ABYSSAL TIDINGS

A Message from the Editor

Welcome again to the IRONWATCH, and for the second time we're proud to be able to give you an issue to greet the holidays and the new year with.

Highlights this issue include phenomenal newcomers to the Iron Forge painting team as well as the conclusion to the fantastic Breach story from Michael Grey. Be sure to check it out!

I'd like to ask those of you out there to please come forward with your images, articles, and more! We here at the IRONWATCH are more than willing to use your blog articles, tutorials, or whatever other articles you might think we'd like. Just send us a message, and we'll be sure to include your material in the magazine.

As always, I'd like to thank those of you joining us, whether you're a longtime reader or just cracking open this new issue. Thanks, and Welcome to the Watch!

-Austin

Apologies to Darren Lysenko for not attributing his great Dreadball model on page 47 last issue!

Cover art by Boris Samec
Title art by Mark Smith

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The Iron Forge

Welcome back, and gather around the Forge.

The Iron Forge is growing! We've added new members: Vincent Pascaud and Ian Powell. Be sure to give them a hearty welcome, and keep your eyes peeled for their fantastic work in this and future issues!.

This issue we have:

- Vincent Pascaud with a superb Alpha Simian from Dreadball
- Claudia Zuminich with a stunning Herneas the Hunter from Kings of War
- Christian Schlumpberger with an awesome Big Mech from Dreadball

By Christian Schlumpberger

By Claudia Zuminich

- Darren Lysenko with "Oodball," his painted Nameless Giant from Dreadball
- Matt Gilbert, with his own painted Alpha Simian from Dreadball

Be sure to take a look, and keep an eye out for the Iron Forge 's wonderful paint jobs next issue as well!

VINCENT PASCAUD

So I spent around 12 hours on this one, but I didn't really kept trace of time. I really hoped to be done by today and grab a chance to be squeezed in, and I'm quite happy about the result and speed I put into it.

I had a lot of trial and errors on the armor. I just couldn't find a color that was both a blue AND different from the skin tone, and yet I knew I just couldn't add another new

color. In the end it's adding green into turquoise that saved the day by creating highlights really different from the skin.

I hadn't tried to use glowing pigments in a long time (never really successfully used

VINCENT PASCAUD

them) but I figured I had made some progress since last time and wanted something strong to contrast : hence the super-fluo Dreadball glove.

He may be a giant full of muscles, he seems to have a pretty peaceful expression, and even his pose doesn't suggest he's jumping all around the place. So I put a little zen to his fluff and added a blue/ white yin & yang.

Hadn't time to work the base, I'll figure out later. Hope you like it!

Cłaudia Zuminich

Christian Schlumpberger

The Big Mech

A military killing machine turned into a DreadBall player. Sounds fun, doesn`t it? When I thought about a fitting color scheme for my mech, I finally ended up painting him the same way as my Corporation team, the Cyberstorm Centurions. People who have seen my previous entries for the Iron Forge might already know that I love limited colors and sharp contrasts and my Corporation team has all that in abundance: dark metal and bright blue shoulder pads, combined with a bluish-white glow at some parts.

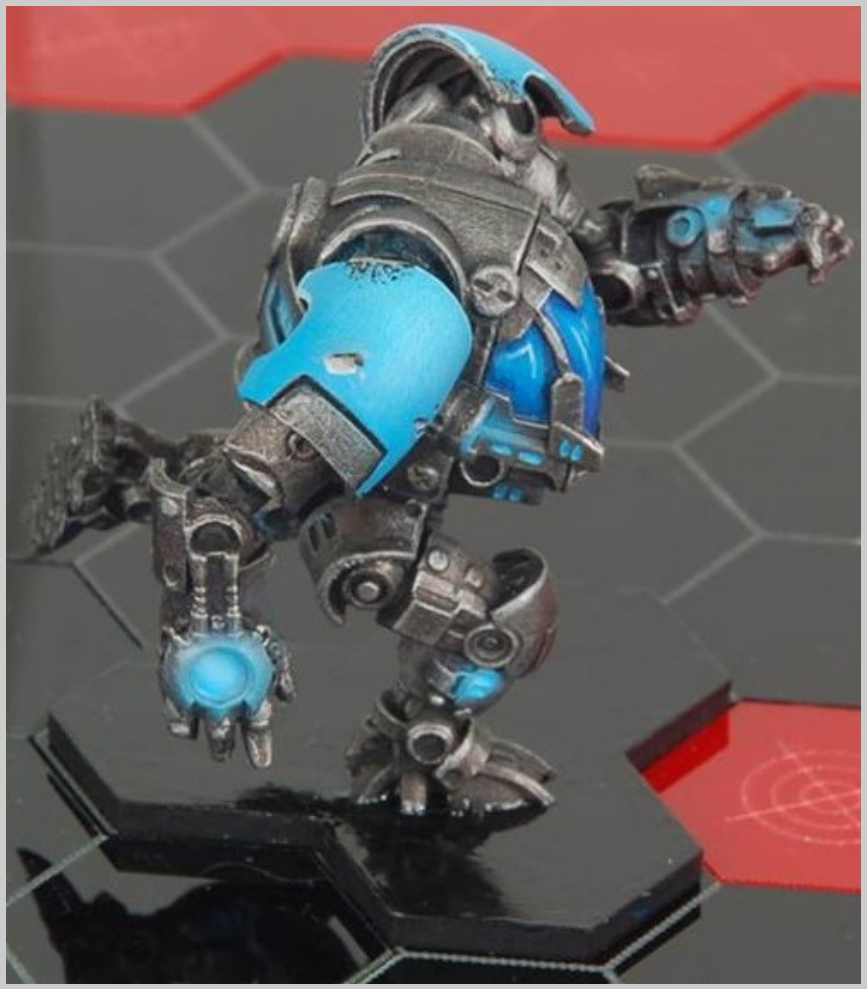
Painting the model was once again a pretty straight forward job: I started with a black primer followed by a basecoat of TinBitz. To add depth and work out the details I drybrushed the entire model with Chainmail and finished with another light drybrush of Mithril Silver. To increase the contrast even more, I applied Badab Black wash to the lower areas of the model and added some final highlights with Mithril Silver.

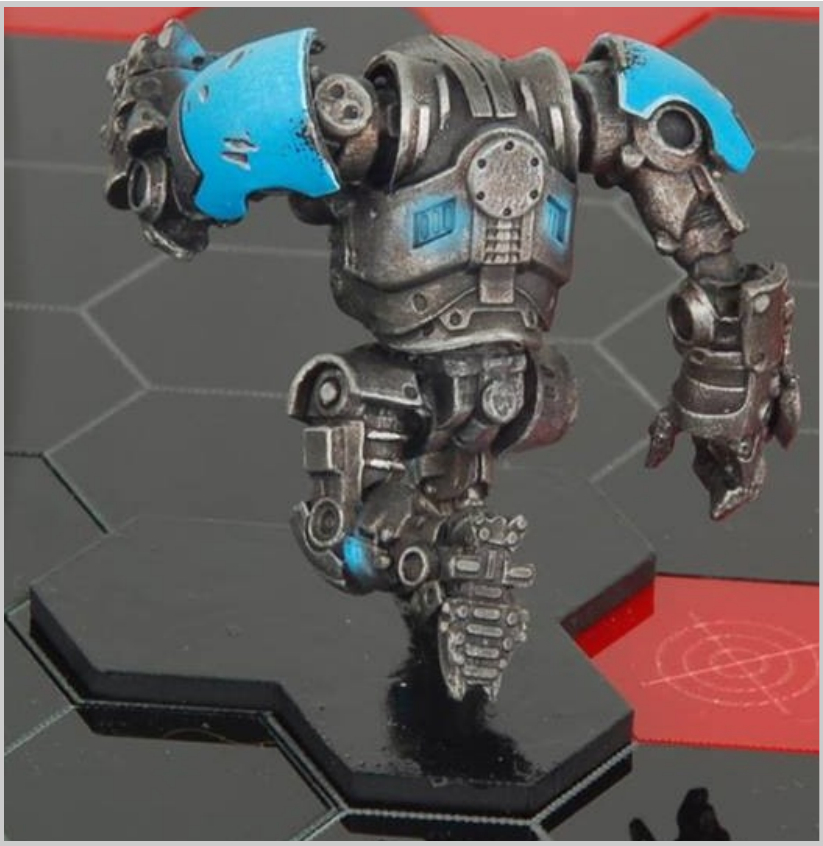
The window section was painted with multiple layers of different shades of dark blue, followed by a white reflex line and glow varnish. The shoulder pads were painted with Ice Blue before I added some highlights with brighter shades of blue. The glow effects were painted with my trusty airbrush and to finish the model I added some battle damage to the shoulder pads to make them look more interesting.

Since I usually try to keep my DreadBall bases clean, I simply painted the base black and added a layer of Vellejo Still Water for a nice gloss effect.

Hope you like him!

Christian Schlumpberger





DARREN ŁYSENKO

I loved this miniature as soon as I saw it. It's quite rare to find models which have a great mix of organic parts and clean-lined armor - usually you'll get all of one or the other. The hideous face and oozing tentacles bursting out of the hi-tech body suit were really fun to work with!

I couldn't resist layering some heavy coats of gloss varnish onto the skin to give it a fantastic gooey shine...

Matt Gilbert

This month we've got a bit of a theme in the Iron Forge with a few of us all picking one of the new DreadBall GIANTs to paint up for display. For me, it's the Alpha Simian.

This model is quite interesting as it's a mix of large expanses of both hard line and organic elements. That meant adopting very different techniques for almost each half of the model surface to be painted.

The fur: After spending a little time looking at the coloration of silverback gorillas, I started with a mid-dark grey base coat on the arm and head fur and a lighter variation on the legs. Both were then drybrushed up to pale grey and then washed with thinned Dark Tone ink. Finally the edges and high-points were drybrushed again with pale grey and almost white on the legs. I also noted that a gorilla's eyebrows are fur and not exposed skin like the official model and so made the correction on my version (although I did make them and the chin fur a little lighter to help pick them out).

The skin: A gorilla's skin looks very leathery. To convey that and also to help distinguish the skin from the fur, I mixed up a greyish skin tone (flesh with a spot of black). This was washed with Soft Tone ink and then layered with thinned coats of progressively lighter tones. I then gave it a light drybrushed highlight to rough up the texture before washing it with thinned Soft Tone ink again. Finally, peaks like the knuckles were given a final highlight.

The armor: So while the organic areas

MATT GILBERT

benefitted from drybrushing, that isn't appropriate for large flat areas of modern plastic or metal materials. Both the red and white armor plates were base coated, washed and then highlights were wet-blended towards the edges. The red areas got a second wash to help tidy up the blending and all the armor had final stark edge highlights paint on unblended. All the white edges were painted but the red only in key areas.

- Paints used on the red (in order) were: Vallejo flat red and GW foundation red mix as the base. Strong Tone wash. Flat red blended into the edges. Flat red with GW dwarf flesh mixed and blended. Thinned red ink wash. Final edge highlights with pure dwarf flesh.

- Paints used on the white (in order) were: Pure white. Thinned blue ink wash. Pale blue (white and ice blue mix) blended to the edges. Pure white edge highlight.

Finally, the blue DreadBall claw was painted ice blue, washed with thinned blue ink then layered up to a final edge highlight of off-white.

All the inks used were Army Painter ones.

ASSORTED NEWS

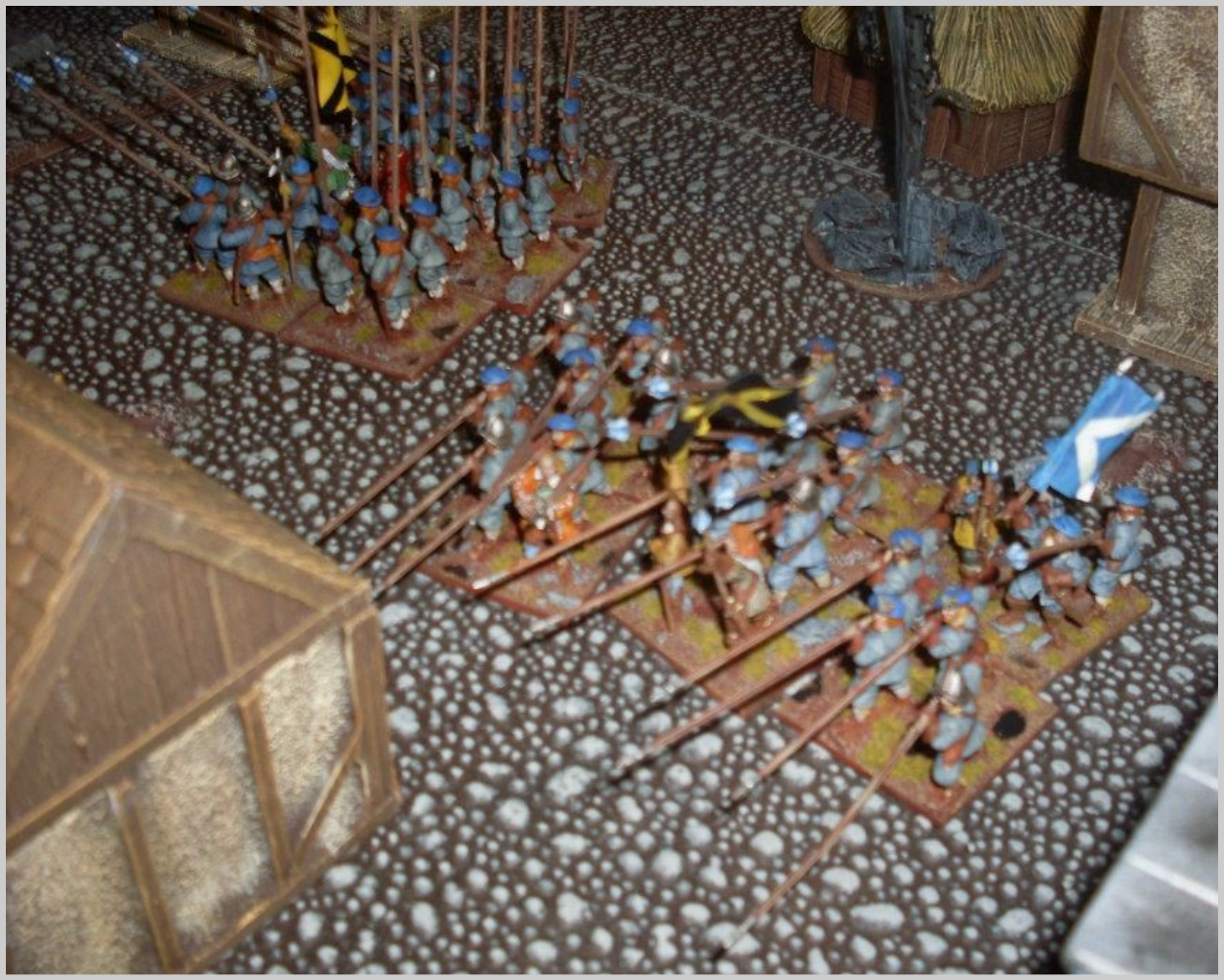
Ironwatch on Mantic Radio

Ohiohammer was kind enough to host our editor, Austin Peasley, on the recent Episode 5 of the Mantic Radio. Be sure to check them out here.

Prepare for Deadzone

Deadzone packages are being sent out! Be ready for Wave 1, with all of the terrain, models, rules, and other goodies it contains. There will be Factions, Mercs, Dreadball MVPs, the custom dice and premium counters and Equipment crates, and more.

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission



By "TSNC"

Heed the Call to War of the King of the North!

By Pete Kijek

"There sits the only King I mean to bend my knee to. The King in the North! …

...My sword is yours, in victory and defeat, from this day until my last day. ....

...The King in the North! [all drawing swords] The King in the North! THE KING IN THE NORTH!"

-from HBO's Game of Thrones s1 ep10 "Fire and Blood"
based upon A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones
by George R R Martin

Since the first time I saw the discovery of a White Walker attack on a Wildling camp which then cut to that famously adrenalin-fuelling intro sequence - and that music, *oh, that music!!* - I have been hooked on GRR

Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and the HBO televisual spectacular that is *Game of Thrones*.

And when I say hooked, I mean completely addicted to the point that I have watched every season so far at least twice through and have the boxed set of novels to read my way through when on long train journeys.

There's something about the mix of low fantasy with dragons and frozen zombies that has struck an imaginative nerve within me, and for nearly a year now, my mind has been made up with regard to putting together a Kings of War army based upon the armies featured within the series and books.

With this fuelling my desire, and with a new year full of potential Kings of War tournaments just a few weeks away (yes, it's only six or seven weeks until New Year!) I thought it was high time to look to actually putting together one of these projects I often dream up. There are three main project ideas I have fighting for supremacy in my head right now. One is to field horde upon horde of Pike Phalanx supported by one girl and a disgraced soldier, but my dreams of an Unsullied army are shelved until I work out how to include three dragons in the army! If it weren't for the fact that I already have a sizeable Undead force I might have considered a mighty, shambling tide of White Walkers- once again I think this may

By "SneakyChris"

By "ManticFanBoyLAD"

be better shelved for another day.

No, the idea - and army - that I am going to build ready for the tournaments next year will be the House Stark army that fights for Robb Stark up until his untimely demise at the hands of Roose Bolton and Walder Frey.

I dreamed up the idea of this army right from the first moment I saw the concept sketches for the Basilean Men at Arms, first unveiled during the Kings of War Kickstarter that was funded over the summer of 2012. These guys looked absolutely perfect for Westerosi soldiers. They seemed to me to fit the theme and style within which the books were written- and as this army is my interpretation of the books more so than the TV series- so I waited and ever so patiently waited for the models to go on general release.

Now they are, and with about five months to go until I'm expecting to host the 2014 Pathfinder Regional Tournament, what better excuse do I have or need to start building this most epic of armies!

The Army List

The actual army itself is being constructed from the Kingdoms of Men list, despite using the Basilean models. Now, I'm no slouch when it comes to constructing a flavorful army list, but this needs to be competitive too- it is for tournaments! So I defaulted to my Pathfinder colleague and top tournament KoW player Nick Williams!

I gave him a simple enough brief and, well, why don't I let him explain? Please welcome to my blog my special guest, Mr Nick Williams!

"Build me an army worthy of Westeros!"

That was the challenge from Mr Pete. For some reason he comes to me for army list advice and wanted me to put together an army for him to build.

Wanting to base it on the rather excellent *A Song of Ice and Fire/Game of Thrones* series, he laid down the following requirements for a Kingdoms of Men army:

-Well balanced, including a mix of infantry, cavalry and ranged units.

-A horde of infantry somewhere.

-Very few "fantasy" elements.

-Able to be built using Mantic's miniatures.

By "imm0rtal reaper"

-Includes Robb Stark and Brienne of Tarth characters.

-Plenty of banners for freehand painting.

-Some kind of healing ability in the army.

I could work with that, and I did! I included a core of a Spear Phalanx horde, two regiments and two regiments of Foot Guard with musicians. This is a solid infantry force that can take some serious damage and dish it out equally. I'd have preferred to include some Ogres as shock troops instead of the Foot Guard just as a personal preference, but they didn't fit the theme too well. The cavalry wing came in the form of two Knight Regiments, each with a musician. I'd have preferred to have some light cavalry to help shield them from other armies cavalry, but a lack of models meant this was a no go. Either way, two regiments of heavy cavalry is a very heavy hammer to hit against the anvil of the infantry force. Even if they get tied up by enemy cavalry, the infantry won't be far behind.

For the war engines, a simple battery of three Trebuchets would do the trick. Without going overboard on artillery, these three should be able to make a significant dent in the opposing army for Pete to exploit. At the very worst, they'll tie up enemy flyers while the rest of Pete's army goes to town on the opposing battle line. Heroes were next, and Robb Stark was an obvious choice. I used a general on horse,

By "TSNC"

with a Blade of Slashing to fill points out. Simple but effective. Robb can remain with the Knights Regiments inspiring them and swinging combats in their favor. Brienne was tricky. She needed to be very good in combat, as good as Robb at least but without Inspiring. At least as far as I've gotten up to in the books (currently about halfway through book three), she's more of a laughing stock than someone who inspires the men around her. Cruelly, the option was rather obvious – an Ogre captain *(Kinda fits the books description of her, too! -Pete)*. Seriously tough, seriously hitty and effectively without Inspiring, since "her" Inspiring only affects other Ogres. A wingless Elohi makes an absolutely perfect Brienne model. This left me some points left over to pad out the army with four Army Standard Bearers. They all went on horses, since the 5 points is a steal and one of them got the healing charm to fulfill the healing ability. Why take so many you ask? Well two of them can stay back with the infantry force to make sure it gets the Inspiring cover it needs, while the other two can go hunting war machines. Being very nippy means they can hop along with the Knights until the ASBs get in range of a war machine. Charge it, and it doesn't matter whether or not you kill it since it shuts down the shooting next turn. It's an equally good tactic for shutting down Undead magic. Overall, while there are a few things that I would change if I were able to use other models or some of the more fantasy like Basilean models, this is a tough army that wouldn't be a walkover for anyone."

So there we have it, the explanation of the army list! And this would be what it actually looks like on paper:

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KINGS OF WAR

House Stark army

Kingdom of Men (Neutral)

Foot Guard — Infantry

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(20)	5	3+	-	5+	10	14/16	115	
- Musician							10	
- Exchange shields for two-handed weapons							0	
Regiment(20)	5	3+	-	5+	10	14/16	115	
- Musician							10	
- Exchange shields for two-handed weapons							0	

Spear Phalanx — Infantry

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(20)	5	4+	-	4+	10	13/15	95	Phalanx
Regiment(20)	5	4+	-	4+	10	13/15	95	Phalanx
Horde(40)	5	4+	-	4+	20	20/22	180	Phalanx

Knights — Cavalry

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(10)	8	3+	-	5+	16	14/16	175	Crushing Strength (2), Headstrong
- Musician							10	
Regiment(10)	8	3+	-	5+	16	14/16	175	Crushing Strength (2), Headstrong
- Musician							10	

Trebuchet — War Engine

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)

General — Hero

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	3+	-	5+	4	13/15	110	Crushing Strength (1), Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							20	
- Blade of Slashing							5	

Ogre Captain — Hero

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	6	3+	-	5+	5	14/16	125	Crushing Strength (2), Inspiring (Ogres only)

Army Standard Bearer — Hero

Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
- Healing Charm							30	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	

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Blade of Slashing The unit rolls one extra dice when attacking in melee.

Blast This rule is used for all weapons that explode on impact with the target or otherwise inflict massive amounts of damage with a single hit. If the unit's ranged attack hits the target, roll a die as indicated in the bracket and multiply the hit by the result of the die. For example, if a unit suffers a hit from a Blast (D6) ranged attack, it will suffer from one to six hits rather than a single one. Once this is done, roll for damage as normal for all of the hits caused.

Crushing Strength Used to represent the devastating effects of melee hits from creatures of terrible strength or that are equipped with very heavy close combat weapons or even magical weaponry. All melee hits inflicted by the unit have a +(n) modifier when rolling to damage.

Exchange shields for two-handed weapons Lower Defence to 4+, gain Crushing Strength(1)

Headstrong "Wavering's for little wide-eyed girls with ribbons in their hair... and Elves." – Dwarf proverb. Whenever the unit begins a turn Wavering, it rolls a die. On a 4+ it shrugs off the effects of Wavering and can act normally that turn.

Healing Charm This artefact can only be used by Heroes. The Hero has the Heal (3) special rule.

Indirect Fire The unit fires its shots in high arcing trajectories, which means that the distance to the target is pretty much irrelevant and that most cover is pretty much useless. However, if any enemies get really close, it's impossible to hit them.The unit fires indirectly, which means it never suffers any to hit modifiers for range or cover (but it does still need to see its target!). On the other hand, it can never shoot targets within 12".

Individual A single guy running around the battlefield benefits from having much greater freedom of movement than regimented troops, and is difficult to pinpoint in the confusion of battle (unless he's sitting on a huge flying beast, that is). Units with this rule are normally made of a single model representing a roughly mansized individual. These obviously behave in a very different manner from regimented units or very large creatures. The following rules represent this:
The individual does not have any flank or rear facings. Consequently, it is able to see, and therefore shoot and charge, all around.
The individual can make any number of pivots around its centre as it moves, including At The Double!
Enemies never double/treble their Attacks when fighting the individual, regardless of their position. Similarly, the individual does not double/treble its own attacks when attacking an enemy in the flank/rear. It does still treble its attacks against war engines, however.
When shooting against the individual, enemies suffer an additional -1 penalty on their rolls to hit.
When charging the individual, move into contact with it normally, but after making contact, turn the individual to face the front of one of the units you charged it with rather than the other way around. In addition, if the individual is routed and the charger decides to advance D6" directly forward, it can make contact with another enemy unit. This is treated as a successful charge and the charger is lined up against the new enemy as normal and can immediately attack again! This rule represents the fact that an individual is often not enough to completely stop a charging unit in its tracks. Note that this rule applies to charging individuals as well.

Inspiring The bravery of a heroic general, or the presence of a great big flag, can convince warriors to stand their ground a little longer. For creatures like the undead (that don't care much about banners), the proximity of their general or of a sorcerous banner fills them with supernatural energy. If this unit, or any friendly unit within 6" of this unit, is Routed, the opponent must re-roll that Nerve test. The second result stands.

Musician When testing the Nerve of an enemy unit in combat with one or more of your units containing a musician, you can add +1 to your total, as the terrifying effects of the instrument take their toll on the foe's morale.

Phalanx From the front, these units look like a forest of sharp spikes pointing at you – not the most inviting of proposals for a charging horse... or anyone else really. The unit rolls an extra 5 Attacks in melee if it is a Regiment, or 10 extra Attacks if it is a Horde. These attacks are added after multiplying the Attacks for flank/rear charges. In addition, Cavalry units and units with the Fly special rule that charge this unit's front suffer from a -1 penalty on their rolls to hit.

Piercing This rule is used for all ranged attacks that can penetrate armour with ease (such as shots from rifles and war engines), as well as spells and other magical ranged attacks. All ranged hits inflicted by the unit have a +(n) modifier when rolling to damage. In addition, ranged attacks with a Piercing value of at least (3) are so powerful that they can punch their way through cover easily, so they never suffer the -1 penalty for soft cover on their rolls to hit. They also suffer a -1 rather than -2 to hit when shooting at targets in hard cover.

Very Inspiring Men are above all else extremely professional soldiers, superbly trained to follow to the letter their leaders' orders, which are transmitted very efficiently to every unit on the battlefield by use of numerous brave messengers.This is the same as the Inspiring special rule, except that it has a range of 12"

So there we have it. My new army that I'm putting together, ready for the new season!

And now I open it up to all of you! Another of my colleagues in the Pathfinders, Mr. Michael "Puggimer" Baker has been running a rather successful "Escalation League", which you can read about on his own blog so I shall refrain from going into too much detail here, but basically over the next few months I'd love for you all to join me in building a new tournament army!

We'll be officially starting at the beginning of December, and looking to build a minimum 250pts worth of our armies for that month!

There will be points to score too, for those more competitively minded, more of which I shall explain in my next installment.

For now, I'll leave you to consider what army you'd like to build? I hope I've provided some inspiration for you to get started, and please let me know what armies you're all intending to build in the comments below! It

By "TSNC"

By Nick Williams

can be a brand new army, or maybe an army you've got already, but never got around to painting and modeling? It really doesn't matter- just join in!

Till next time ▪

Editor's Note: A full uncropped image of the army list is available in the Appendix.

The Pursuit: Kings of War Scenario

By Neil Dixon and Alistair Moore (aka Platemail)

It started with a mounted Kingdom of Men messenger sailing through a carefully prepared Dwarf ambush. Dwarfs then returned the favour by annihilating the Kingdom of Men force in a vast cavern, deep under the Abyssal Mountains. Both these battles were fought in our Kings of War narrative campaign, all for the glory of possessing the mysterious Amulet of Nex, an artefact which can bring great power for good or evil. For the scenarios, write ups of the story and reports of the battles so far, see Issues 12 and 13 of Ironwatch.

This is the third scenario, and invented a skirmish scenario and side plot. It sees the Kingdom of Men force again attempting to gain reinforcements after their defeat in Scenario 2: Encounter. What follows are details of the scenario for you to adapt to your own games, a brief write up of how the game played and the continuation of the story behind our campaign.

Gawan undid the leather straps under her chin and pulled off her helmet. Pushing her hair from her eyes, she paused as she heard the deep, rumbling sound of snoring amongst the birdsong and the rustling of the leaves. Her eyes fell on a wild haired Dwarf, sitting under a great oak tree.

Taking a step forward, she jumped at a loud snort. A grey, battle scarred goat, condensing breath flushing from its nostrils emerged from behind the oak. It growled and she took a step back.

By "Dusty"

"Who disturbs my trance?"

She looked back at the Dwarf under the tree, who had opened his right eye and raised his head.

"Gawan, of the Iron Brock. I am seeking Sluaghaven, the one they call Two Piece."

"It is I," said the Dwarf Berserker Lord, turning, and patting his mount on the head. "I have enemies to report, riding through the

Williamshed Valley. Humans, three mounted, and three grossly shaped, hulking monsters with large axes."

Sluaghaven sprung up, and stood erect to his full height. Gawan reached the height of his tattooed navel, and stepped back to look up at him in awe.

"Cotton End Tower, they push for it, again? This time they must not be allowed through. I will prepare my Berserker in arms to intercept. Join us, and lend your gift of fine Dwarf Engineering to eradicate the Humans questing for this precious amulet!"

By Christian Schlumpberger

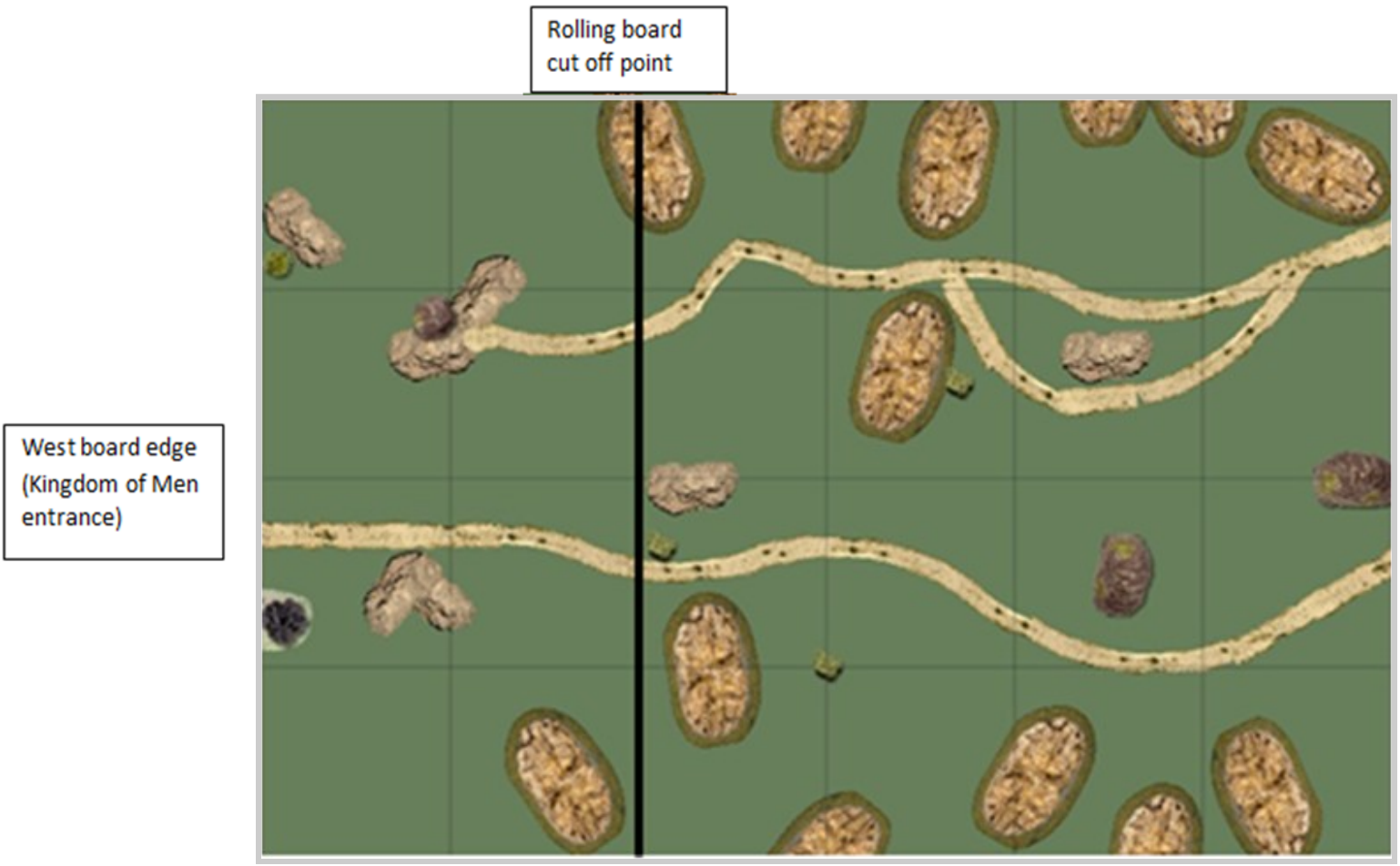
The Pursuit: Scenario Outline

Background

Captain Petrovich has had no news from General Renovich, and wonders whether Dermontivich, the messenger he escorted through the Williamshed Valley, has reached the main Kingdom of Men camp in Nivkh. After the devastating loss his scouting force received in the cavern, it dawned on him now the Dwarfs must be trying to possess the Amulet of Nex for themselves.
Before the Dwarfs can establish a force to rival him, potentially reaching the Amulet first, he forthwith despatches three more messengers with his Elite Ogre bodyguard. They again must attempt to give warning to General Renovich through the Dwarf infested Williamshed Valley. This time he prays the General responds to his pleas. Little does Petrovich know the Dwarfs have a secret weapon.

Set Up

Start with a 4' x 6' board. You will need an additional 2' x 4' board section to use. The setting is the Williamshed Valley, rock strewn, with roads running through the center.



Setup

Starting Forces

Each force may pick an army up to 500 points from the Kings of War rulebook. The forces may comprise of one Hero or war machine only, and the requirement to take a solid unit is ignored. These forces are not deployed on the board, and instead may appear as the games progress. To start, the Dwarf force gains the Iron Brock, and the Kingdom of Men force gains three Messengers and an additional 150 point regiment or troop from the Kingdom of Men army list.

Dwarfs

Gawan - Piloting the Iron Brock [1] Hero

Unit size	Mo	Ra	Me	Def	Att	Ne
1	10	5+	5+	6+	3	13

Special: *Fly, Encumbered, Bombs, Break off, Dismay*

Encumbered. The model has a 360 degree vision, and treated as if they have the Individual special rule during Melee. The model can make up to two 45 degree turns during a Move action. If an Encumbered model declares an At the Double or Charge action, it may only move in a straight line.

Bombs. Bombs have a range of 6” and count

as Indirect fire with no minimum range penalty. Roll to hit using the model's range characteristic. A successful hit is resolved at blast D6.

Break off. In the model's own turn following melee, the model may act as normal, including choosing used ranged attacks or declare a Move action.

Dismay. Mounted models suffer an additional -1 nerve in melee from a model with this special rule.

Originally designed and built by the Dwarf Warsmith Heilyn, his former apprentice Gawan now pilots the fast moving flying machine.

For an overview of how I created the model and background, see my article 'Forging the Iron Brock' in the next issue of the Ironwatch.

Kingdom of Men

Messengers (x3)

Three mounted messengers, which act independently.

Mo	Ra	Me	Def	Att	Ne
8	4+	5+	4+	1	10/12

Special: *Individual, Break off*

Starting the Game

The Kingdom of Men player takes the first turn, moving the force on the board from the west hand board edge as indicated on the map. The Dwarf player moves their force from either of the short board edges.

By Grant Mahoney

By "ManticFanBoyLAD"

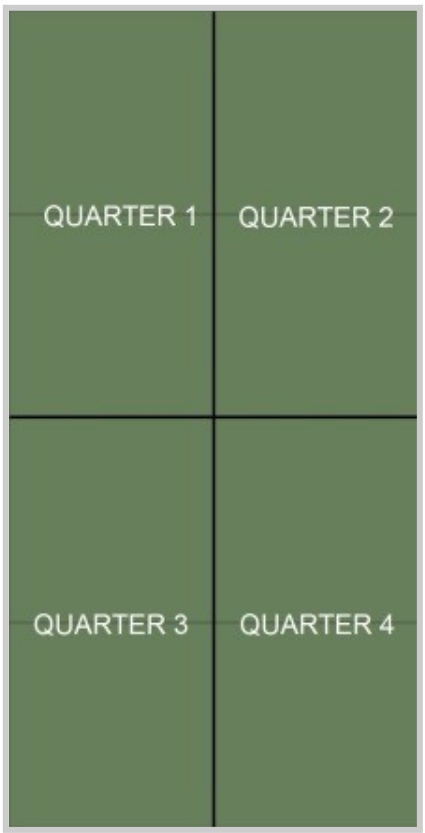
Play Sequence and Special Rules

Initiative roll. At the start of the second turn both players roll a D6. The player with the highest score has gained the initiative and takes their turn. Repeat the initiative roll at the start of each subsequent turn. If the scores are drawn, the player who did not have the initiative in the last turn gains the initiative.

Make a note of the turn number at the end of every turn.

Recycling board. At the end of each turn, check the distance of each model being used as a messenger to the east hand short board edge. If the distance is 24" or less, another 2' x 4' section is added. The 2' x 4' section on the west hand side is then removed, meaning the table size of 6' x 4' is retained. Any models on the removed board section take no further part in the game.

Terrain is determined randomly on the new 2' x 4' section. Divide the section into quarters as indicated in the following image, viewed from the east edge of the board.



The player who had the initiative during the turn rolls a D6 and adds the turn number. The same player compares the result to the table on the next page, and can position the corresponding terrain how they choose. New forces are not deployed, and are moved on from the east hand edge of the quarter indicated by the controlling player. Models can only declare a Move action on the turn they appear. Once the watchtower has been revealed, no more board sections are added.

By "TSNC"

Recycling board terrain.

Result (D6 + turn number)	Quarter	Terrain type	Example
2-4	Quarter 1	Impassable	6" length base of rocks or similar
	Quarter 2	Cover	6" section of hedging or tree base that obscures line of sight.
	Quarter 3	Enemy	Dwarf unit or hero
5-7	Quarter 1	Impassable	6" length base of rocks or similar
	Quarter 2	Cover	6" section of hedging or tree base that obscures line of sight.
	Quarter 3	Difficult	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 3	Enemy	Dwarf unit or hero
8-9	Quarter 1	6" section of hedging or tree base that obscures line of sight.	6" section of hedging or tree base that obscures line of sight.
	Quarter 2	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 3	Enemy	Dwarf hero or unit
	Quarter 3	Building	House
	Quarter 4	Enemy	Dwarf hero or unit
10	Quarter 1	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 2	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 2	Building	House
	Quarter 2	Allies	Kingdom of Men unit or hero
	Quarter 4	Building	House
11	Quarter 1	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 2	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.	6" bog or marsh that causes half movement.
	Quarter 2	Building	House
	Quarter 3	Building	Watchtower
	Quarter 3	Allies	Kingdom of Men unit or hero
	Quarter 4	Building	House

By "WeedyElf"

Victory Conditions

The Kingdom of Men player wins if any of the messengers survive long enough to reveal the watchtower and enter it using a Move action (it is assumed the Messenger dismounts). If all the messengers are killed, the Dwarf player wins.

Campaign Effect

If the Kingdom of Men player wins they are able to use reinforcements from Captain Renovich in their remaining battles. This means they can upgrade one unit of mounted Knights to gain the Elite special rule at no points cost. Additionally, if the Flying Brock is destroyed, the Dwarf player cannot use it for the next battle whilst it is repaired.

If the Dwarf player wins, he may redeploy up to D3 units in the next scenario.

The terrain was rockier here, scarred black and unnatural by Dwarf miners. Travelling as a group, their presence in Williamshed Valley was no secret to the Cailleach Clan. The flying Dwarf machine had marked their path for five leagues, no doubt wary of the hulking presence of Brose and his two fellow Ogres. He knew it was time for hard riding, and made the sign for Ambricht and Fealiguss to splinter into a triangle riding formation.

Matching pace, they remained in his peripheral vision, but he heard and saw Ambricht to his left hang back as he became the target of the flying machine. He did not let his mind linger on what became of his fellow alchemist apprentice after the attack.

Hails of shot echoed out, mixed with the snorting of wild, fierce, Brock Riders, the flying machine on their trail all the while. The ground became greener, and he passed houses, signalling the sign of friendlier lands. He slowed as he spotted Cotton End Tower;

the reassuring body of Pike men marching out and forming in front. He looked round to see Fealiguss, and Brose far behind. Unwilling to think himself safe enough to shed his body guard, he slowed to let them catch up and Fealiguss did the same.

As the Ogres continued to distract the Dwarf enemy, he knew Fealiguss and himself had to complete their imperative mission. A wild Dwarf riding a giant goat dealt him a vicious bloody wound to his forehead. Wiping the blood dripping down his brow, he rode on. His heart beat hard inside his chest, but as the watchtower became ever closer, he slowed his horse slightly, perching on his stirrups ready to dismount, hoping his more relaxed pace would not make him as vulnerable as he felt. Then he vaulted off his horse, collapsing at the metal and wooden door of the Watchtower. He heard the bolt click and he collapsed inside, the cold flagstone floor giving him the safe feeling of a warm blanket.

Battle Report

As the three messengers rode on the board, Gawan harassed the closest messenger with bombs, failing to kill him. By turn four, the Ogres finally saw their opportunity, and committed three wounds to Gawan, but this was not enough to down the Dwarf flier. In turn five, the Kingdom of Men had greatly outrun their body guard, and a revealing another board at this point would see the unit eradicated!

Two of the messengers are pounced upon by Berserker Brock Riders and their Lord

The remaining messengers, protected by the Pikemen, are finally within reach of safety

As the messengers hovered just over 24" from the eastern edge, Berserker Brock Riders had scented human blood, and rode out, badly injuring one of the messengers. The hardy alchemist was only wavered, and the full complement of messengers remained.

One messenger finally fell in a storm of fire from the shot of the Ironwatch. The Dwarf Berserker Lord had now leant his considerable combat prowess to the Dwarfs, causing a wound on the non-wavering messenger. The duo of messengers, dedicated to their mission just would not fall. At the end of turn seven the messengers had reached the vicinity of the watch tower. They just had to survive long enough to reach it. It

A messenger dies horribly at the joint assault of the Iron Brock and Berserker Lord, leaving the last remaining messenger to save the day

By Nick Williams

all rested on who won the initiative and how the Dwarfs faired in melee.

Turn eight saw the messengers get ever closer, as they won the initiative and could potentially move into the watchtower. In turn nine, it swung the other way. The initiative passed to the Dwarfs; another messenger was felled and the final, lone messenger was wavering within one turn of moving into the watchtower!

The game fell down to the initiative roll in turn ten. With suspense, we rolled off and the Kingdom of Men won it! There was no stopping the messenger as he jumped off his horse at the door and screamed at the keeper of the watchtower to let him in!

Summary

A very different battle to our normal Kings of War games, the random element of the initiative roll and the forces that come on from the recycling board played a large part in the result. I thought it was a quick and fun scenario, definitely entertaining. There is a high degree of variability and adaptation you can apply to this scenario to use in your own games. The point values, starting forces and recycling board layouts can all be tweaked.

You could also use a variation to introduce other players to the game, each taking parties of messengers to try and reach the watchtower. It is not only quick, so you can play at the start or end of a club night, but there is such a low model count that it is ideal for starting players to test the game mechanics. Having an aim and story behind the battle also makes it extremely fun! Comments and feedback are welcome.▪

By Mantic Games, Used with Permission

BREACH

By Michael Grey

PART SIX

Containment Incident
Ref#: RESTRICTED
DATA[redacted]..Time Stamp:
RESCTRICTED DATA
//Evol. Phase
CLASSIFIED//Excise
All Galactic
Positional Data
Repositories//
//Alert Status
[redacted]DEADZONE[redacted]//

They ran down the stairwell, taking three steps at a time, one hand anchored to the central handrail to spin them around the landings to take another flight. The concrete walls blurred by, but still it seemed to Cole they took much longer to descend than the exhausting climb up. Noise from the street reached them, growing louder at each landing as they passed the blacked out windows, dopplering the noise in waves of volume. A repeating wash of screams, growing louder with each descended stair.

Cole tried to block that out, concentrating on the pounding of boots reverberating off the naked stone. The only one of them seeming to take the headlong rush in their stride was the alien Yndrel, who descended with catlike grace, sometimes running its feet along the walls when it took a corner too fast.

“There’s a tunnel, right?”huffed Cole between breaths. “You dug a tunnel to the docks.”

“Did you see any earthmoving equipment?” answered one of the troopers shortly.

They reached the bottom after what felt like an hour, and rushed through the heavy metal door leading to the cellar. A Rebel held the door open, making frantic waving motions for them to get through. Cole and Cas passed, followed by the two last troopers, and the door was slammed with solid finality, unseen bolts sliding home with a solid *clack*.

"This way!"

Cole didn't see who spoke, but everyone ran in the same direction and he followed. They ran through the cellars he spent the last few days living in, all strangely silent and empty now, inhabited only by the sound of their boots and the odd abandoned bed roll.

And Jean.

Cole caught the barest glimpse of her seated at a table, uncaring at their passage.

He stopped, nearly causing Cas and the trooper behind her to collide.

"Cole…?" said Cas carefully, following his gaze.

"What the frack man, move!"

"Give us a second," said Cas.

"We got-"

"I said a second!"

Cole ignored them, approaching Jean slowly, half crouched as if she were a frightened animal likely to bolt. It looked as if she hadn't moved since he saw her last. Slumped over the table arms crossed, staring at its top.

"Hey," he said as gently as his racing heart would allow.

She didn't react.

By Pete Kijek

He reached the table and squatted down until he would be in her field of view.

"Hey," he said again.

She blinked, but didn't look up.

"We have to go," he said, trying to keep the rising panic from his voice.

She kept looking ahead. "Go then." The breath barely left her lips.

"Jean," he leant in and hardened his voice, "I'm serious. There's something very bad coming this way."

"I know."

"Then come on!"

"I'm not going."

His heart sunk. "Jean," he said plaintively.

"I've got… I've got nothing, Cole. I don't want to run to nowhere, and never have anywhere to return to. I'll never see my sister, my mother… I don't want to live through each day knowing that."

"You've got me," he said, knowing he had never said anything before with such conviction.

"I know. Thank you. But goodbye."

"No, I'm not letting you do this." He stood and put his hand under her arm. He would carry her to the shuttle if he had to. She spun on the seat and there was a pistol in one hand, its barrel pointed at his face.

The unexpected turn stunned him still.

"I'm not going, Cole. I don't think I have the strength to do this until this last minute, but it's all I have."

His instinct was to look at the gun, but he could not take his eyes from her face. He had never seen anything so sad in his life.

"There's only one bullet in this," she said, "Please don't make me use it on you."

Finally he let go. "I'm so sorry," he whispered.

"Yeah," she said. "Me too."

***

They caught Cabal and the others up quickly. They had not asked what kept them, and they in turn offered no reason. Instead they ran, exactly as if their lives depended upon

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By Christian Schlumpberger

it.

He had not given much thought to how far the cellars went, but they went from one knocked-through room to another without needing to slow. He wondered if perhaps it was a mental trick, his mind stretching out time and distance from something he knew he could not change, would forever wonder if perhaps he had just tried a little harder, said the right words.

It was as that thought completed that the leading trooper kicked a solid-looking door without slowing, and ran out into blinding sun light.

He ran out, his eyes watering as they adapted, bringing his vision down from pervading white to washed shades of yellow. They were out on the street. After what he'd seen from the roof the realisation made his skin erupt in gooseflesh.

The troopers wasted no time with shouted directions. They knew the way and ran in the surety Cole's sense would force him to follow.

He had no intention of being left behind.

The streets were as empty of people as the last weeks, but now with a background buzz, the distant crowd noise of collective fear.

If they were heading for the waterfront surely the tunnel had dropped them in that direction, then they should be ahead of the surge from Landing Square. So long as they ran they might keep ahead of the wave spreading outwards from the Square. The wave of people and…

He shook his head to stop the train of thought.

"This way!"

The lead trooper turned off the street and lead down an alley. The constricted path forced them into single file. They jumped refuse and fallen boxes. Yndrel leapt from overturned dumpster to another on all fours, its rifle strung across its back. It easily

overtook everyone else, vaulting out at the alley's end and into the sunlight.

Where it looked up the street and froze.

They piled out after it, and Cole saw why it stopped. It seemed they had not kept ahead of the bow wave.

People streamed across the end of the street, following the main thoroughfare in a blind effort to get away from Landing Square. A few stumbled into their street, the sheer volume of bodies ejecting them from the rush, but when they saw the rebels and the weapons they carried, they turned and forced their way back into the press to be swept out of sight.

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"Well we're not going that way," said one trooper.

Cabal paced a few metres up the street, looking up at the buildings around them like a caged animal. "Symonds, find us an alternate route."

"On it," said one, looking down at his wrist computer.

"No need, this way," said Cole. He broke for an alley further down the street.

"Cole?" said Cas.

"I know these streets. I've lived them for the past month. This way heads dockside, trust me."

The troopers looked at Cabal for affirmation. He nodded, and they were following Cole within a heartbeat.

He led them between buildings, what looked like blind alleys through semi-hidden passages. They were at the very edge of Cole's knowledge of Prime's backstreets, but he had his bearings and the tang of salt in the air confirmed he was going in the right direction. All the while the rolling sound of the crowd stayed with them, rising and falling oddly, making it hard to pinpoint.

He barrelled from the alley into a street, and

was knocked sideways.

He cried out in shocked fear without knowing what hit him. He fell heavily, scraping wrists against the pavement and saving his head from striking the ground. Before he could stand something pounded him hard in the back, forcing him down and driving the air from him. Then another blow like the first, then another.

“Get off him!”

A hand was under his arm, hauling him upright. He shook his head clear. He thought he must be concussed because the world ran passed him in a blur. Then he realised he was not concussed, because the world was moving. Moving, running, pushing, jostling and shouting.

They had emerged into the stream of humanity running from Landing Square.

“You okay?” Cabal had him by the shoulders, looking into his eyes while the troopers made a barrier against the tide. The people flowed around them like any other obstacle, the sight of Yndrel not even enough to catch their attention.

Cole went to respond, nearly choking when he tried to speak winded, and settled for a nod. A scream from the street’s end cut through the air. At first he thought someone else had fallen in the press. But there was more in that cry than unexpected pain. There was fear. Desperate, pleading white fear.

There was another identical scream, cut off mid-cry in a way that was more disturbing than the scream alone.

Cabal heard it too. He looked around searching for the source just as the press of people surged against the thin line of troopers. At first they bowed under the pressure, Cas tried to link arms with the trooper called Symonds, then they went over as the crowd rolled over them in a wave of screaming.

Behind them all, chasing at the crowd like wolf among sheep, something sickly red leapt and landed in the press, its impact heralded by another short-lived cry.

Cabal pulled Cole to one side, shouldering people from their way, pushing and tripping where the press became too much, until they were against a wall.

By Matt Gilbert

Cole allowed himself to be lead, too much in shock to do anything else. Only Yndrel managed to follow them out. The crowd could truly be called a river now, and he could not see Cas or any of the other troopers beneath its flow.

There was yet another scream, and another overlaid. And then one another, deeper, more resonant. More akin to a howl. The sound struck Cole deep, plucking at some primal nerve. It was the sound of the hunt, a noise humans had not been the focus of since they gathered in caves around moss fires.

The crowd reacted as one, screaming and swarming. They tasted the terror at their backs and responded.

Cole stood on a step to the building's entrance and looked up the street. Black bodies darted among the crowd , wherever they went bodies fell from sight. To his eye it looked like the petri dishes of his work, the ones kept in the more secure labs, the ones where viruses hunted among cells, killing, eating and propagating.

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And behind them, larger shapes. Two arms, two legs, like people. But that was where the similarities ended. They were too big. Much too big. They galloped on all fours at inhuman speed, standing on hind legs to lunge, extending their reach well beyond a human height, and where they made contact there were bursts of red mist and another man or woman fell.

They ate into the ragged end of the crowd like a disease, their progress frenzied, yet frighteningly purposeful.

And each fallen person was another step toward them.

Cole looked back down to the gap where the troopers had fallen, now nothing more than a swell in the torrent of bodies. "Cas!"

There was a tug at his sleeve and he realised Cabal was trying to pull him down the street. "Let's go." When Cole pulled his arm back Cabal turned back. "They're gone, Mister Cole. Make their sacrifices mean something."

With a strength he did not think he had left Cole pulled Cabal's hand free.

"You may be prepared to treat people as collateral, but I'm not." He had to shout to make his voice heard above the rush. It was

By Paul Scott

like standing in a storm; one Cole now turned around and waded back into.

He forced his way back to where he left the crowd, more wading than walking, and found the hump which was where the squad fell.

"Cas!"

There was a break in the flow, and from between running legs Cole saw a still set of boots, braced against the oncoming tide. They heaved and the solid flow of people ruptured as Cas stood, pushing herself against the rush, holding Symonds under one arm. She looked around disoriented, mouth open and breathing hard.

"Here!" Cole had to scream above the din. The urgency that made his skin prickle gave his voice a shrill tone. She looked over and pushed his way.

Her progress was slow, hindered by Symond's limp body and the people constantly pushing against her.

She wasn't going to make it. Cole went to reach her, was knocked immediately by a man rushing by, another clawed at his face as he stepped into her path. Something impacted in his gut, forcing the air from his throat, and he began to fall onto the ground again.

A hand caught him before he could, pulling him upright.

Cabal smiled at him. "You wait here." He gently pushed Cole into Yndrel's hands, and waded into the throng. Elbows, knees and hands made path, meeting Cas. They took one of Symond's arms each over their shoulders and together hauled him out of the crowd.

Belatedly Cole went to their side, shrugging off Yndrel's leathery grip and pushed Cas free, taking Symond's other arm.

"We. We went down. Too. Many people," she said through deep breaths.

"Where's everyone else?" said Cole.

Cas shook her head. "I don't know."

Beside him Symonds moaned and pushed against Cole and Cabal's hold.

"It's OK, Symonds, "said Cabal. "We have you."

The impact was so sudden that Cole did not react straight away, his senses simply did not react that fast. One moment he and Cabal held Symonds, the next something heavy landed between them, tearing Symonds free of their holds and crushing him into the ground.

The shriek seemed to arrive afterwards, travelling slower than the thing it came from, descending like some great bird of prey, to hack at Symonds with recurved talons. It punched down again and again, freeing padded armour and skin from the trooper's back. Symonds could not even attempt to cry out his lungs were lacerated.

The thing on his back tilted its head up and let forth a roar which sprayed ropes of translucent salvia into the air. Cole could feel the wet heat coming off the thing. It radiated a cloying foulness which brought a feeling of nausea to the back of his throat.

It was between him and Cabal. Even hunched it was taller than any of them. It was close enough to touch, its hands and forearms dripped with Symonds. It finished its roar and swung its hairless head towards Cabal.

"No!"

There was a pop, little louder than a light globe cracking in the encompassing sound

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surrounding them. It was followed by more. *Pop. Pop, pop.*

Under each report the monster shook. It turned to Cas, holding her pistol in the standard marine double-handed grip; feet apart, shoulders square. She stood less than five meters away, a look of determined anger on her face.

It rumbled a growl from deep within its chest. A wet purr that vibrated Cole's diaphragm.

Then it leapt, the launch of such a heavy body minced Symonds' remains, and scored grooves in the pavement, directly at Cas.

She was ready. It was obvious her muscles could not match the creatures. So she let gravity do the work, and let herself drop and roll from its path. It sailed over her and she pressed the pistol into its soft sides, and fired the gun in a single automatic burst.

The creature roared and twisted in midair. It landed awkwardly on its shoulder, chitinous skin cracking the concrete.

It tried to right itself, rolling turtle like. It rocked past its zenith and a heavy boot met its chest. Cas almost had to mount the thing to bring her weight to bear.

The creature blinked, as if it were surprised to see her there, and she fired into its face.

Its head snapped back under the impact, distending its neck until the workings beneath were visible under the skin.

Immediately its head rolled back without a mark noticeable on its face.

Cas looked more surprised than frightened as its hand reared back, the stained claws constricted into a wicked point.

The iron bar struck it just below the wrist. Cole put all his medical knowledge to good use, picking the spot where the hardened skin would be the weakest. He was rewarded with a sound from the creature that, while still a roar, held a different timber than before. At once its attention snapped from Cas to him.

“Didn’t like that, did you?” He hefted the bar, wrested from the building’s stair rail, and swung it again at the same spot. A satisfying crunch vibrated up the metal.

“Does it hurt? Does it, you bastard?”

Without warning its other arm swiped Cas from its chest and it bounded to its feet.

Cole backed off, but did not turn to run. He braced his feet apart, and weighed the bar. It looked ridiculous against the monstrosity he faced, but he felt oddly calm facing the thing down.

It looked at him, their eyes on a level despite its squatting pose. It cocked its head doglike to one side and a clicking sounded from the back of its throat.

Cole didn’t move. “Come on, then.” And he raised the bar like a batter.

“Hey!” A small rock hit the creature’s head, and it turned to look. A pinprick of red light appeared in the centre of its brow, and its head exploded.

Without changing posture its body pitched forward, the hardened skin striking the ground and making the concrete shake beneath Cole’s feet.

“Nice shot, Yndrel.”

“Thanks, boss.”

By “Daedle”

The alien shouldered his rifle, its long barrel releasing a delicate wisp of smoke into the air.

Cole could not take his eyes off the fallen beast. The realisation of what almost happened hit him and he felt like he might throw up.

“You okay?”Cas came up beside him, holding her ribs but otherwise unhurt. He nodded.

“You did good,” she said. He nodded again.

A booming rumble surrounded them, deep enough to make the skin shiver on his bones. It rumbled like an avalanche between mountain peaks, and it came from the direction they ran from.

Cole looked. They all looked. What came around the street corner made each of them question what they thought was happening on Gaian, and the horrors such a vast galaxy could hold.

Cole had thought he knew fear before, but that was a weak, thin emotion compared to the nightmare that walked his vision. What he had thought was fear was a concern for his own personal wellbeing. What he saw now surpassed such a narrow view of peril. What stalked the streets of Gaian was not simply death. It was extinction. The ending of all, the eater of worlds and species, entropy made violent. A force of the universe which would simply not stop until everything, *everything*, in the galaxy was dead and its purpose had been fulfilled.

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All that passed through Cole’s mind before the thing roared. A physical force of sound which drove all sound before it, and he had to reassess everything which just passed through his mind.

A staccato series of flashes erupted from a half demolished building opposite it. Figures

By Pete Kijek

clambered over the rubble. They wore grey plated armour Cole knew to be bulky and imposing, but against the monster they faced they were like children. Children who were running.

Tiny puffs of dust kicked up from the wall behind the creature. Logic demanded that some of the fusillade must have hit, but it showed no sign of that. It turned on the figures, retreating tactically, one group covering another under a hail of fire, leapfrogging away.

It turned at the hip, then let forth with another bellow as it twisted back with the awful slowness sheer size tricks the eye with. Its arm extended as it came, a fist the size of an engine block balled, and it struck the corner of a building. The wall exploded outwards in a shower of debris like it had detonated.

The rubble flew across the street, impacting the retreating troopers in a rain of debris.

The building side they occupied disappeared under a dirty cloud. No more gunfire came, and the creature planted one massive foot forward and leaned in to scream a roar of utter defiance.

Cole knew then that there was nothing on the planet that could stop that thing. And before it came more of the bounding monsters, and before them a horde of the men and women of Gaian, lurching on ungainly feet, seeing through dead eyes.

“Time to go.” Cas had his shoulder, pulling him ungently down the street. He did not need telling twice, and turned, following Cas, Yndrel and Cabal.

They ran with what remained of the crowd. Gaian’s dipping sun threw out increasingly long shadows, confusing their paths. Behind them, the sound of a thousand stumbling footfalls seemed thrillingly close.

Around him, the crowd seemed too thin, too few people now ran on and Cole felt the chilling sensation they were the only people left on the planet.

The thought nearly made him forget where there running. “There! That way!” he pointed down and alley. They left the main street without slowing, leaving the crowed behind. The sudden quiet was eerie, accentuated by the low sun cutting the world up into slats of shadow and the orange glaze of late afternoon.

And then they were there, before the row of dock front warehouses where it felt like everything started all those weeks ago.

They ran between the buildings and emerged onto the dock front. Cole breathed hard, sweat dripped from his eyebrows and his hands shook. But despite that his blood turned cold.

There was nothing there. No troopers . No shuttle.

He laughed. It seemed that was the only thing left in the universe he could do.

Cabal put his finger to his ear. “When you’re ready, Bendramin.”

The water beside the dock began to fizz, then boil, and like some ancient beast rising from the depths, a shuttle rose up from beneath the surface. Water cascaded from its sides to blow into rainbows in the fading light.

As it came level with the docks the back lowered in a ramp and Bendramin’s large frame appeared in the doorway, and when Cole took his hand he had never felt anything so welcoming in his life.

The big alien looked around as Yndrel jumped in last, and turned to Cabal with a sad look on his face. Cabal shook his head and Bendramin accepted that with a quick nod and hit the door close button.

The shuttle was a single, open space. All the

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walls had been removed for greater room, allowing anyone in the hold to see through the tinted screen in the cockpit. Foldaway seats swung from the hold walls and Cas pushed Cole into one before taking up her own. Before Cabal took his own seat up front Cole felt his insides grow heavy. The view through the front port filled with golden sunlight as the craft yawed and gained altitude.

Cole had only ever been aboard one shuttle before. That was a huge thing, a corporation lifter, designed for ferrying vast numbers of people to populate worlds, and his entire time aboard that he had no idea when he was moving or stationary. This shuttle was the polar opposite. Small, old, and the feeling of velocity was transferred from the outside directly through his seat. He already felt the motion sickness kick in before they began to pick up speed and he heard the fuselage begin to shake.

The shuttle swung around until he could see where they were heading; the hole through the Bubble, the channel through which the tanker's took to Gaian's oceans. He had always thought it looked huge from the waterfront. Hundreds of metres high. But now with it approaching by the second he was beginning to reassess that judgement.

"Is this thing safe?" He had to shout above the engine whine.

Bendramin said, "So long as no one starts shooting at us we'll be fine."

By Pete Kijek

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The shaking inside the shuttle took on a brief, urgent tone. The craft's skin rattled until it buzzed, then the whole shuttle bucked. The aft sprung like it had been kicked. Cole's head slammed into the seat rest and he had brief impression of water filling then entire view portal. The shuttle alarms screamed for attention and Cole had to shut his eyes. The movement and noise numbed him with sensory overload and he could feel his conscious fading.

With a supreme effort he opened one eye. Then the other. If this was his last moment he would see how he would die.

A constellation of lights across the cockpit lit up simultaneously, flashing in time with a rising alarm tone.

Bendramin said nothing.

"You're kidding me, right?" said Cole.

"Sub-nuclear detonation, downtown Prime," said Cabal, his fingers dancing over the cockpit readouts. "Initial pulse register bearing zero six hundred. Impact five seconds. How long to the opening?"

"Six seconds," said Bendramin flatly.

The front view was still dominated by blue sea. Bendramin fought with the controls, his thick muscles knotting as he pushed on the yoke until Cole was sure it would snap off. As he watched, wispy grey began to claw up from the bottom of the view screen, slowly growing until it took up half of the screen, and continued to creep upwards.

He could not understand what he was seeing until, when the white took up almost the whole screen, Bendramin relaxed his grip and pushed the yoke to one side, and the whole view flipped.

He completely missed the vomit-inducing

inertia as he realised what had happened. The explosion had knocked the shuttle around and Bendramin had flown them through the hole upside down.

***

The rebel frigate *Repercussion* was a ship of war. It was not designed to carry excess personnel, and those on board were expected to be working when not asleep. When Cole was shown his bunk he soon worked his way back in the hold. It was quiet there. More airy and less oppressive.

He found himself curling up against the pallets of supplies brought on from Gaian. They still held the odour of humid vegetation he had not realised he'd come to take for granted. It smelled of home. The only home he had known for six years. Gone now.

He had no idea how long he'd been there. In the ship's eternal now he had no way to mark time's passing. Instead he allowed himself to lose his mind in the familiar smell while it lasted.

After some time he became aware of footsteps. Cabal came down the rows of stacked pallets. Cole offered no greeting when he reached him. Cabal sat himself down, and let the silence stretch out a minute more before, "It was the same way for me."

Cole said nothing.

"You would be surprised how similarly people react in these circumstances. Even the aliens. It must be something about

By Pete Kijek

sentience. The need to anchor ourselves to the familiar before we can accept change."

"Shut up," Cole whispered.

"Some accept it quicker than others, but we all do in time."

"Shut up. Just shut up," he said, voice rising to almost a shout.

"What I mean to say is I know what you're going through, Mister Cole."

"Do you? Do you really? You understand how many people you allowed to be killed down there? Millions. Millions, and people I…

people I knew." He slumped against the pallet. "Maybe I could have done something different, I don't know. But you, you could. And you didn't. Instead you filmed it. That's what you were doing on the rooftop wasn't it? You were recording the whole thing like some sick snuff film."

"It's a little more complicated than that."

"Does the complication bring people back to life?"

"In a manner of speaking. The video we recorded today will save lives, Mister Cole. Pure and simple. Right now the Enforcers are wiping all records of Gaian from the CPS navigational database and scrubbing all reference to it on the public archives. They have sleeper programs whose only purpose is to seek out and corrupt any mention of the place on private drives and corporation G-Net servers. Within a week no one will be able to find any mention of the Gaian star on any database. There will be no reason to even question why it is not there. They have done this before, Mister Cole, at least fifteen times that we know of, probably more. They're keeping this away from the entire population of the Sphere, and why? To avoid panic, because panic is unprofitable."

Cabal spat the word like it tasted foul. "We could not save the people of Gaian, but the video we took today will be seen. There is a record of what the Council is willing to sacrifice, and people will act."

Cole laughed without humour. "Are you sure about that?"

Cabal didn't answer straight away. He rested back against the pallet and looked off among the rows of supplies he lost men to retrieve. "Do you know what I did before this? Before I took up arms against everything I knew?" When Cole didn't answer he continued, "I was a sports coach. A football coach, to be precise."

Cole looked up and Cabal nodded. "Eleven years spent training school students in Octavia on Luxor Eight. Don't worry, you won't have heard of it. House Boaistuau made sure its importance on the G-Net was downplayed right after they found a cobalt seam beneath Octavia, and calculated rehousing the population was too expensive

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compared to just poisoning the water table." Cabal went quiet again, this time with a different look in his eyes. "It was no Gaian Prime, merely fifty thousand people. But I had to watch as each of my pupils grew sick. Boaistuau's heavy drillers moved in without even waiting for everyone to die."

He stood, and when he spoke again there was an edge to his voice Cole had not heard before. "You may have lost some friends today but each of those children were like my own. We are all capable of great acts, we just need a push in the right place. Yes I let people die today, but this planet was already dead, and you better believe I will make each one of their deaths mean something. But we can't do it alone."

Cole looked up. Cabal held out his hand, palm open.

"Are you ready to make a difference, Mister Cole?"

...END...

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By Pete Kijek

'Twas the night before Christmas

By Michael Grey

'Twas the night before Christmas, And in every House and Conglomeration
Corporate espionage agents put into effect plans of anti-infiltration.

Departments chiefs were sleeping, tucked up sound in downy beds,
Dreams of spreadsheets, trends and profits running through their heads.

Agents oiled weapons, and guards checked security systems,

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Because without fail, this time of year, they knew an attack would hit them.

It happens every December, on the night of the twenty fourth,
An enemy agent infiltrates the headquarters of the boss.

They know this wily agent, he arrives each year by sled.
He's the best, and they know *he* knows it, because he taunts them by wearing red.

But this year they're prepared. "That fat bastard won't get through.
There're magnetic locks and all the doors, and the roof is reindeer-proof."

But then, roundabout midnight, when even spies are sleeping well,
Alarms are triggered, klaxons blare, and armed guards hit the stairwells.

"He's coming through the heating ducts!"

"Oh, not this time he's not."
And they'll quickly set up ambush points, but no one will be caught.

You see, the fat man knows his business. He's been doing this for years.
Nice things for the good children. For naughty, there'll be tears.

So every year on Christmas morn, there's a stocking for each CEO.
It's sticky, it drips, it's worse than coal. It's the head of someone they know.

That's why security chiefs scramble to catch him before he rides out of sight
On his reindeer-powered flyer, singing, "Ho ho ho, good night!"

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KINGS OF WAR

House Stark army

Kingdom of Men (Neutral)

Foot Guard								Infantry
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(20)	5	3+	-	5+	10	14/16	115	
- Musician							10	
- Exchange shields for two-handed weapons							0	
Regiment(20)	5	3+	-	5+	10	14/16	115	
- Musician							10	
- Exchange shields for two-handed weapons							0	

Spear Phalanx								Infantry
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(20)	5	4+	-	4+	10	13/15	95	Phalanx
Regiment(20)	5	4+	-	4+	10	13/15	95	Phalanx
Horde(40)	5	4+	-	4+	20	20/22	180	Phalanx

Knights								Cavalry
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
Regiment(10)	8	3+	-	5+	16	14/16	175	Crushing Strength (2), Headstrong
- Musician							10	
Regiment(10)	8	3+	-	5+	16	14/16	175	Crushing Strength (2), Headstrong
- Musician							10	

Trebuchet								War Engine
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)
(1)	5	-	5+	4+	1	9/11	60	Blast (2D6), Indirect Fire, Piercing (3)

General								Hero
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	3+	-	5+	4	13/15	110	Crushing Strength (1), Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							20	
- Blade of Slashing							5	

Ogre Captain								Hero
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	6	3+	-	5+	5	14/16	125	Crushing Strength (2), Inspiring (Ogres only)

Army Standard Bearer								Hero
Unit Size	Sp	Me	Ra	De	At	Ne	Pts	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
- Healing Charm							30	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
(1)	5	4+	-	4+	1	9/11	30	Individual, Very Inspiring
- Mount on a horse, increasing Speed to 9							5	
							1600	

Blade of Slashing The unit rolls one extra dice when attacking in melee.

Blast This rule is used for all weapons that explode on impact with the target or otherwise inflict massive amounts of damage with a single hit. If the unit's ranged attack hits the target, roll a die as indicated in the bracket and multiply the hit by the result of the die. For example, if a unit suffers a hit from a Blast (D6) ranged attack, it will suffer from one to six hits rather than a single one. Once this is done, roll for damage as normal for all of the hits caused.

Crushing Strength Used to represent the devastating effects of melee hits from creatures of terrible strength or that are equipped with very heavy close combat weapons or even magical weaponry. All melee hits inflicted by the unit have a +(n) modifier when rolling to damage.

Exchange shields for two-handed weapons Lower Defence to 4+, gain Crushing Strength(1)

Headstrong "Wavering's for little wide-eyed girls with ribbons in their hair… and Elves." – Dwarf proverb. Whenever the unit begins a turn Wavering, it rolls a die. On a 4+ it shrugs off the effects of Wavering and can act normally that turn.

Healing Charm This artefact can only be used by Heroes. The Hero has the Heal (3) special rule.

Indirect Fire The unit fires its shots in high arcing trajectories, which means that the distance to the target is pretty much irrelevant and that most cover is pretty much useless. However, if any enemies get really close, it's impossible to hit them.The unit fires indirectly, which means it never suffers any to hit modifiers for range or cover (but it does still need to see its target!). On the other hand, it can never shoot targets within 12".

Individual A single guy running around the battlefield benefits from having much greater freedom of movement than regimented troops, and is difficult to pinpoint in the confusion of battle (unless he's sitting on a huge flying beast, that is). Units with this rule are normally made of a single model representing a roughly mansized individual. These obviously behave in a very different manner from regimented units or very large creatures. The following rules represent this.
The individual does not have any flank or rear facings. Consequently, it is able to see, and therefore shoot and charge, all around.
The individual can make any number of pivots around its centre as it moves, including At The Double!
Enemies never double/treble their Attacks when fighting the individual, regardless of their position. Similarly, the individual does not double/treble its own attacks when attacking an enemy in the flank/rear. It does still treble its attacks against war engines, however.
When shooting against the individual, enemies suffer an additional -1 penalty on their rolls to hit.
When charging the individual, move into contact with it normally, but after making contact, turn the individual to face the front of one of the units you charged it with rather than the other way around. In addition, if the individual is routed and the charger decides to advance D6" directly forward, it can make contact with another enemy unit. This is treated as a successful charge and the charger is lined up against the new enemy as normal and can immediately attack again! This rule represents the fact that an individual is often not enough to completely stop a charging unit in its tracks. Note that this rule applies to charging individuals as well.

Inspiring The bravery of a heroic general, or the presence of a great big flag, can convince warriors to stand their ground a little longer. For creatures like the undead (that don't care much about banners), the proximity of their general or of a sorcerous banner fills them with supernatural energy. If this unit, or any friendly unit within 6" of this unit, is Routed, the opponent must re-roll that Nerve test. The second result stands.

Musician When testing the Nerve of an enemy unit in combat with one or more of your units containing a musician, you can add +1 to your total, as the terrifying effects of the instrument take their toll on the foe's morale.

Phalanx From the front, these units look like a forest of sharp spikes pointing at you – not the most inviting of proposals for a charging horse… or anyone else really. The unit rolls an extra 5 Attacks in melee if it is a Regiment, or 10 extra Attacks if it is a Horde. These attacks are added after multiplying the Attacks for flank/rear charges. In addition, Cavalry units and units with the Fly special rule that charge this unit's front suffer from a -1 penalty on their rolls to hit.

Piercing This rule is used for all ranged attacks that can penetrate armour with ease (such as shots from rifles and war engines), as well as spells and other magical ranged attacks. All ranged hits inflicted by the unit have a +(n) modifier when rolling to damage. In addition, ranged attacks with a Piercing value of at least (3) are so powerful that they can punch their way through cover easily, so they never suffer the -1 penalty for soft cover on their rolls to hit. They also suffer a -1 rather than -2 to hit when shooting at targets in hard cover.

Very Inspiring Men are above all else extremely professional soldiers, superbly trained to follow to the letter their leaders' orders, which are transmitted very efficiently to every unit on the battlefield by use of numerous brave messengers. This is the same as the Inspiring special rule, except that it has a range of 12".

By Grant Mahoney

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